



California Public Utilities Commission

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUC CONTINUES COMMITMENT TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS

SAN FRANCISCO, September 22, 2005 - The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today reaffirmed its commitment to universal telecommunications service by approving funding for a number of programs.

“We have a number of consumer programs at the PUC and our telecommunications programs are some of the best in the country,” said PUC President Michael R. Peevey. “These services benefit the public in a variety of ways, including offering assistance to people who live in rural areas, people with low incomes, and people with special needs. I am pleased to approve funding for them today to continue the good work they do in helping the state’s consumers.”

The budgets approved today are for the following programs:

- **California Teleconnect Fund (CTF):** Adopted a budget of \$22.002 million for July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. The California Teleconnect Fund was implemented on Oct. 25, 1996. CTF provides discounted rates for various telecommunications services for schools and libraries, government-owned health care providers, and qualifying community based organizations.
- **Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (ULTS):** Adopted a budget of \$289.844 million for the program for fiscal year 2006-07. The ULTS program was implemented in 1984 and provides discounted basic telephone services to qualifying households with income below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Currently, over 3.5 million low-income households are connected to the public telephone network through the ULTS program.
- **California High Cost Fund-A (CHCF-A):** Adopted a budget of \$44.528 million for fiscal year 2006-07 and a revised fiscal year 2005-06 budget of \$39.653 million. CHCF-A provides a source of supplemental revenues to 17 small local exchange carriers for the purpose of

minimizing any rate disparity of basic telephone services between rural and metropolitan areas.

- **California High Cost Fund-B (CHCF-B):** Adopted a budget of \$434.583 million for fiscal year 2006-07. The Commission established the CHCF-B program to provide universal service subsidy support in the high cost areas (rural, for example) of SBC California, Verizon of California, Surewest Telephone, Citizens Telecommunications Company of California, and new carriers who commit to providing service to all residential customers in their service territory.
- **Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP):** Approved an annual budget of \$69,030,000 for fiscal year 2006-2007. The DDTP assists in the provision of TTYs to deaf or hard of hearing individuals; assists in the provision of other specialized telecommunications equipment to consumers with hearing, vision, mobility, speech, and cognitive disabilities; and uses third-party intervention, also known as the California Relay Service, to connect consumers who are deaf or hearing impaired with hearing parties.

For more information on the PUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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